Panel considered exhuming Oswald

FORT WORTH, Texas — (UPI) — Members of the Warren Commission once considered exhuming the body of presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, declassified documents made available to United Press International showed yesterday.

The FBI also considered such an action and the CIA requested it, a newspaper report said.

Exhumation of the body is the subject of a court hearing that resumes late today as a result of reports by a British author who cites "persuasive and powerful evidence" that a Soviet secret agent assumed Oswald's identity after Oswald defected to the Soviet Union in 1959.

Previously classified government documents showed the possibility of unearthing the body was discussed secretly by federal investigators and the Warren Commission — which was set up to probe the assassination of President John F. Kennedy — for months after the Nov. 23, 1963 slaying. Oswald was killed two days later by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

Transcripts of a closed Warren Commission meeting held Jan. 21, 1964, show extensive discussion of exhuming the body and either cremating it or moving it to a secret mausoleum. The concern appeared to be possible vandalism of the remains.

The transcripts show that Rep. Hale Boggs of Louisiana opposed moving the body and Chief Justice Earl Warren, after discussion, agreed.

Boggs said: "If you move that body 20 feet over to somewhere else, somebody is going to say that is not the body."

During the same secret session, commission member John J. McCloy said he heard Life magazine was preparing an article on an interview with Oswald's mother, Marguerite Oswald, "and they were throwing in this note she was now saying, giving evidence in this thing that he was a Soviet agent."

Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia responded: "That will blow the lid if she testifies to that."

The article was never published.

Oswald's widow, Marina Oswald Porter, testified last Friday she now believes the grave at Rose Hill Burial Park might be empty. She also raised doubt for the first time as to whether she married the real Lee Harvey Oswald — or a Soviet agent posing as Oswald.

The court proceeding was initiated by Oswald's brother, Robert, who is seeking to stop the exhumation requested by British author and attorney Michael Eddowes, who has Mrs. Porter's consent for the action.

But Robert also considered having his brother's body dug up two days after its burial on Nov. 25, 1963.

In his 1967 book, Robert said he was approached by Mason Lankford, the Tarrant County fire marshal assigned by the Secret Service to help guard the Oswald family. Robert said Lankford suggested the body be exhumed and cremated because "some people . . . were bringing pressure to have the body moved from the Fort Worth area."

Robert said he decided against exhumation.